Covenants signed with WTO

4306. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed several covenants committing itself to liberalise investment and trade regimes within certain time frame with WTO;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what has been impact of liberalised investment and trade regimes on India's economy?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization provides the common institutional framework for the conduct of trade relations among WTO, Members in the matters related to the agreements and associated legal instruments which inter alia include:—

(i) General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994

(ii) Agreement on Agriculture

(iii) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

(iv) Agreement on Textiles and Clothing

(v) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade

(vi) Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures

(vii) Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994

(viii) Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994

(ix) Agreement on Pre-shipment Inspections

(x) Agreement on Rules of Origin

(xi) Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures

(xii) Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

(xiii) Agreement on Safeguards

(xiv) General Agreement on Trade in Services

(xv) Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

(xvi) Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes

(xvii) Trade Policy Review Mechanism.

At present there is no separate WTO covenant on Investment. As a result of Singapore Ministerial Conference of WTO held in December, 96 a Working Group on Relationship between Trade and Investment has been set up in WTO with the mandate to undertake an educative process. The future negotiations, if any, regarding multilateral disciplines on investment will take place only after an explicit consensus decision is taken among WTO Members regarding such negotiations.

(c) WTO Agreements came into force only with effect from 1.1.95 and many WTO Agreements have transition periods for developing countries like India for implementation of various provisions of the Agreements. Therefore, it is premature to make a complete assessment of the impact of WTO Agreements on the Indian economy. However, impact of WTO Agreements is constantly monitored not only through extensive inter-ministerial consultations but also through regular interface with trade and industry associations, in the light of the experiences gained implementation.

Export of Iron ore to Japan

4307. DR. Y. LAKHMI PRASAD: Will the Miniter of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of iron ore to Japan from Visakhapatnam port has come to a standstill in June, 1998;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the impact of delay on MMTC who are exporting the iron?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. Export of iron ore to Japan from Vishakhapatnam port is continuing on the basis of a five-year long-term contract (1996-2000). In terms of the contract, 24 lakh tonnes of Bailadila Lumps and 10 lakh tonnes of Bailadila Fines are to be exported to Japan in 1998-99. Upto June, 1998, 6.56 lakh tonnes of iron ore has been exported to Japan and an additional quantity of 1.65 lakh tonnes to China, including 3.76 lakh tonnes hipped in June, 1998 alone. In July 1998, 2.72 tonnes has been hipped to Japan so far.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.